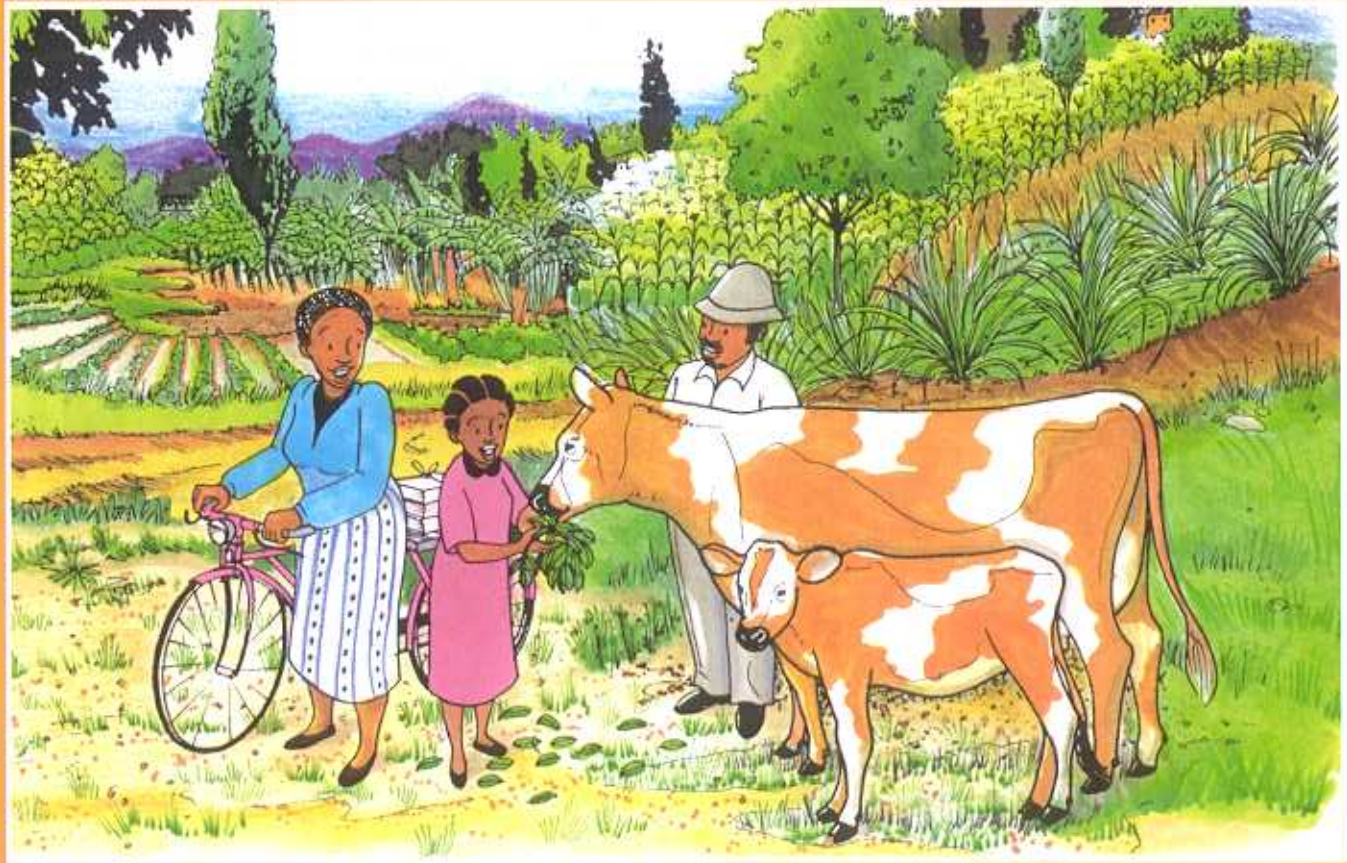


GOOD CALF, GOOD COW



Wambui finds out...
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT, KENYA



Wambui, her mother and their neighbour leave church.

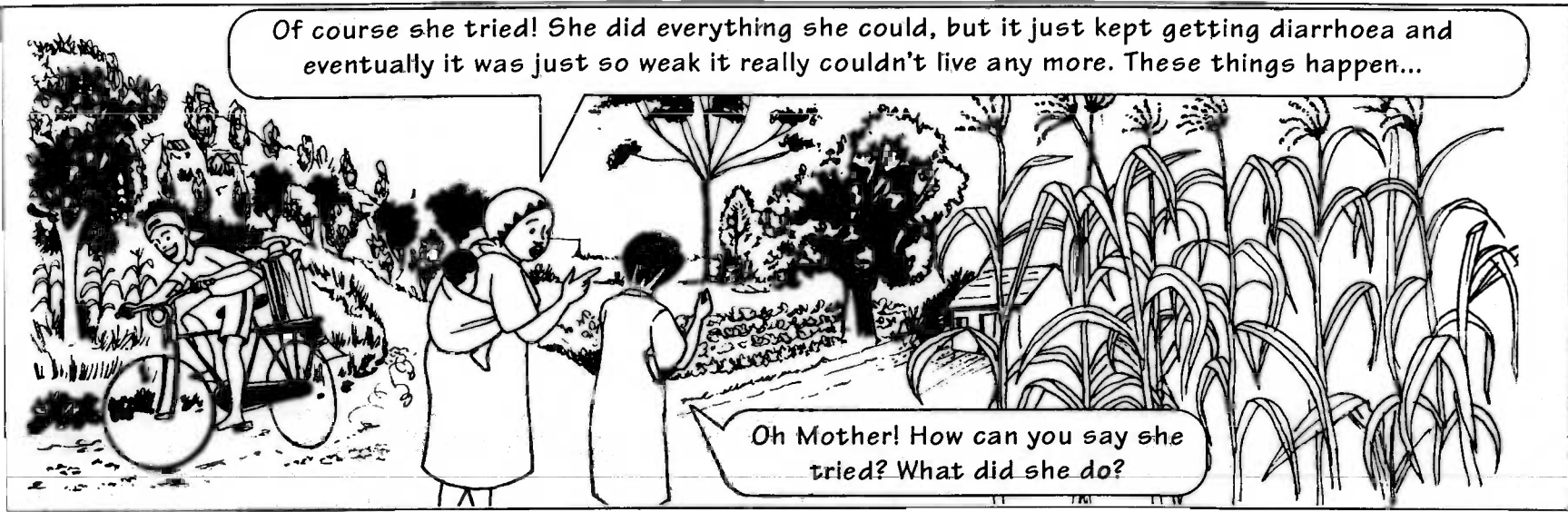
Yes, the calf died last night. It was such a nice heifer too. And we were so pleased to have had a heifer after too many bull calves. Now I don't know what we'll do.



Poor Mrs. Muriithi, her cow is getting so old that this was really her last hope of a good calf.

Why did the calf die?
Did she not try to save it?

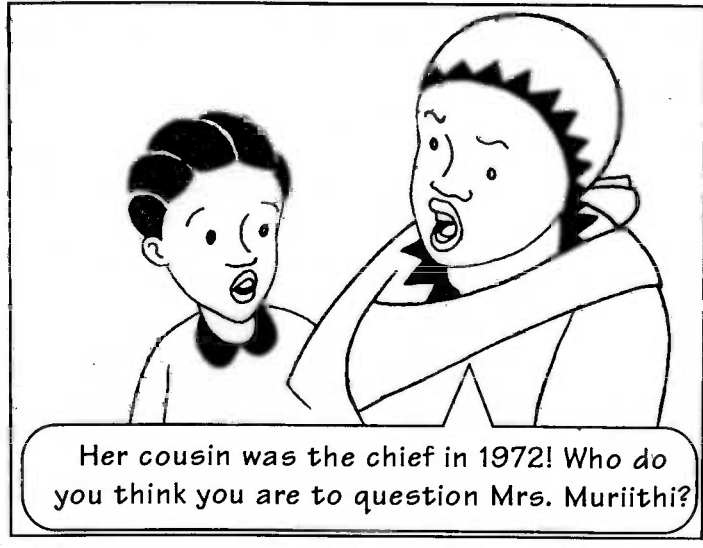




Oh Mother! How can you say she tried? What did she do?



Wambui! I don't want to hear you talking like that! Mrs. Muriithi is a very good lady, she was on the church committee!



Her cousin was the chief in 1972! Who do you think you are to question Mrs. Muriithi?

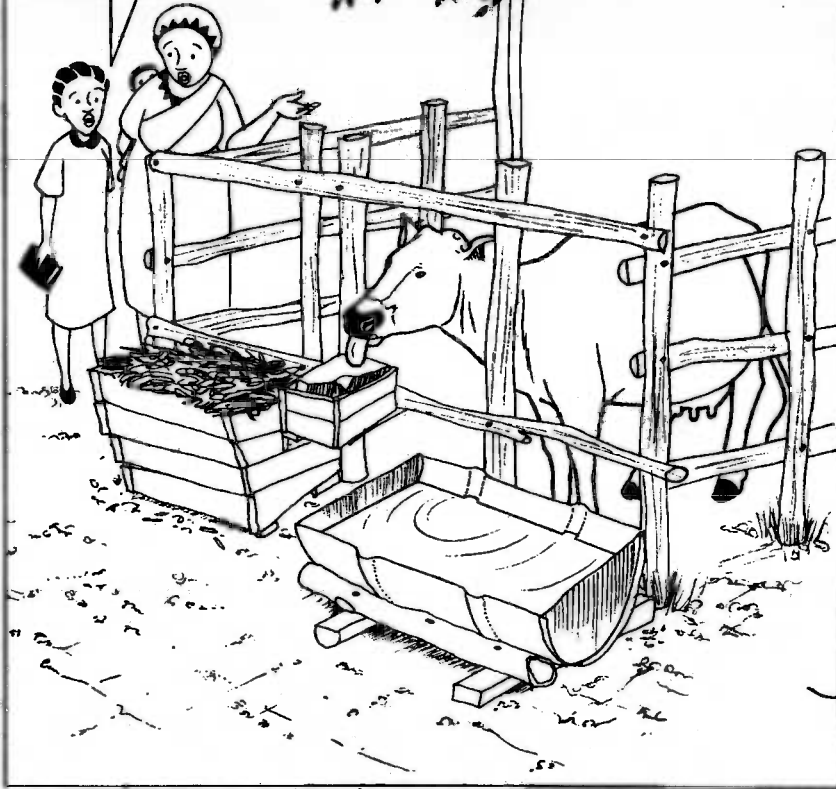


I'm just saying ..

and

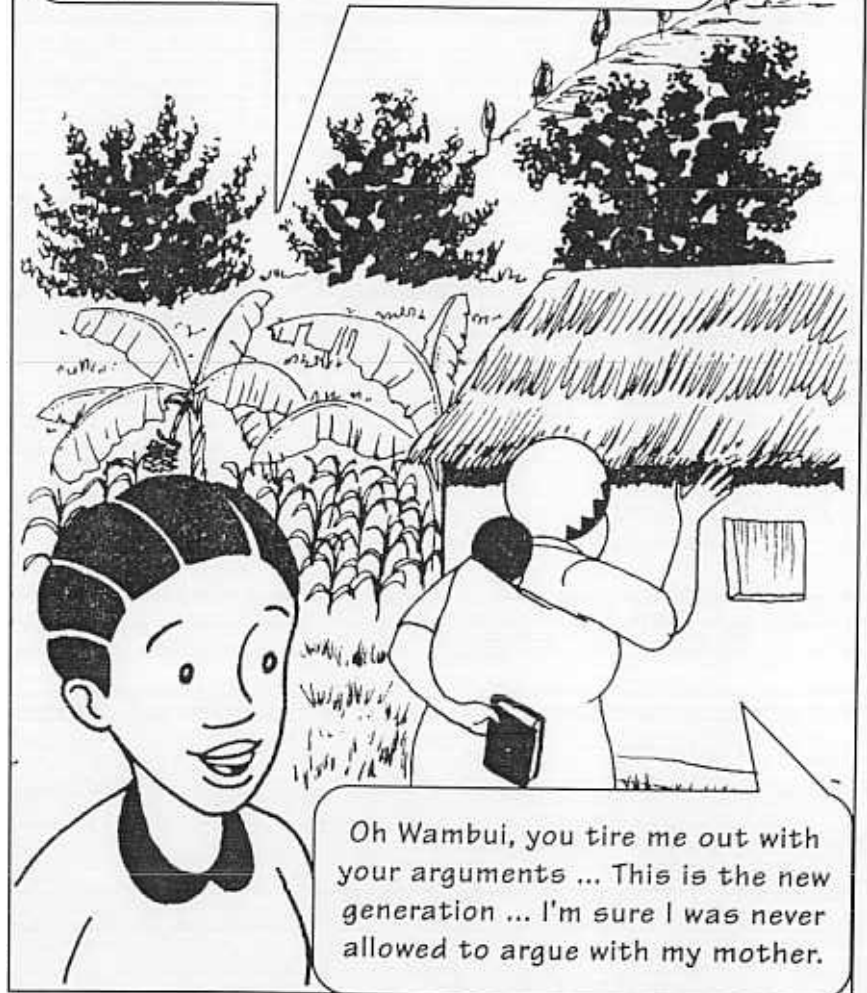
I know what you are just saying and I won't have it!
Besides, we'll be having a new calf ourselves very soon and it is bad luck for you to suggest that we won't have the same problems.

I'm just saying ...



2! Who do
s. Muriithi?

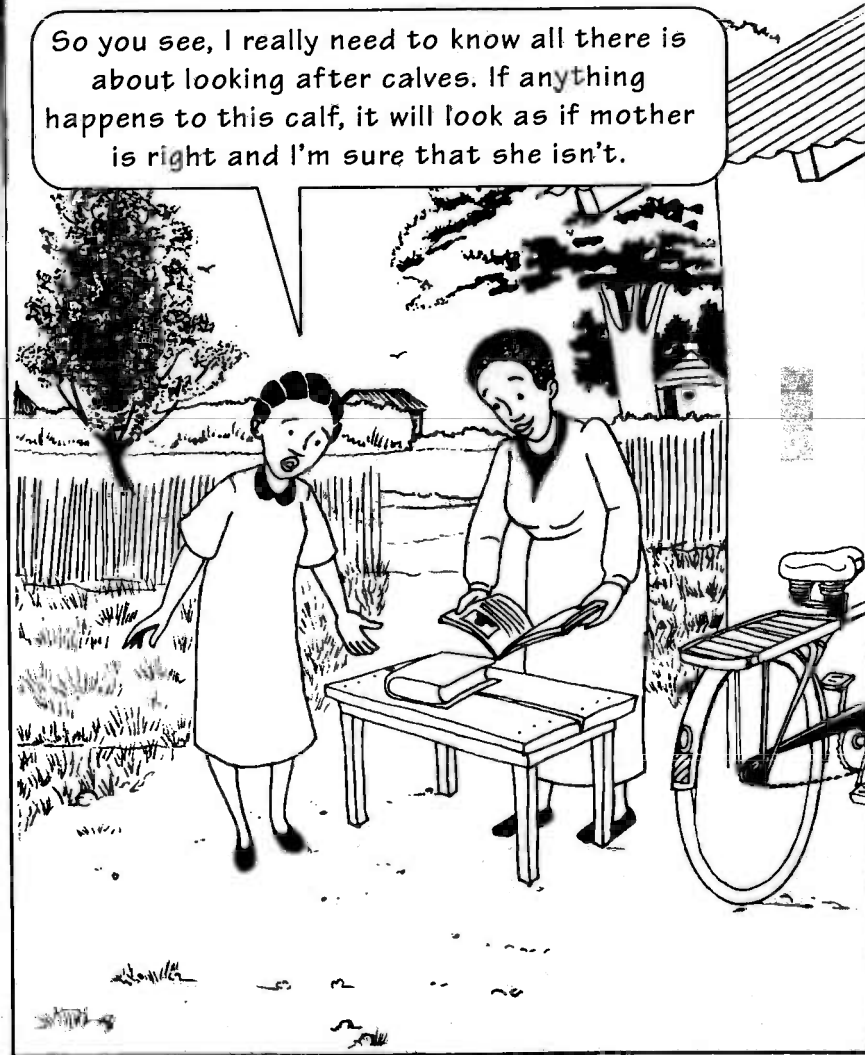
Bad luck is one thing but if we learn all we can about how to look after a calf, then perhaps we can improve our luck ...



Oh Wambui, you tire me out with your arguments ... This is the new generation ... I'm sure I was never allowed to argue with my mother.

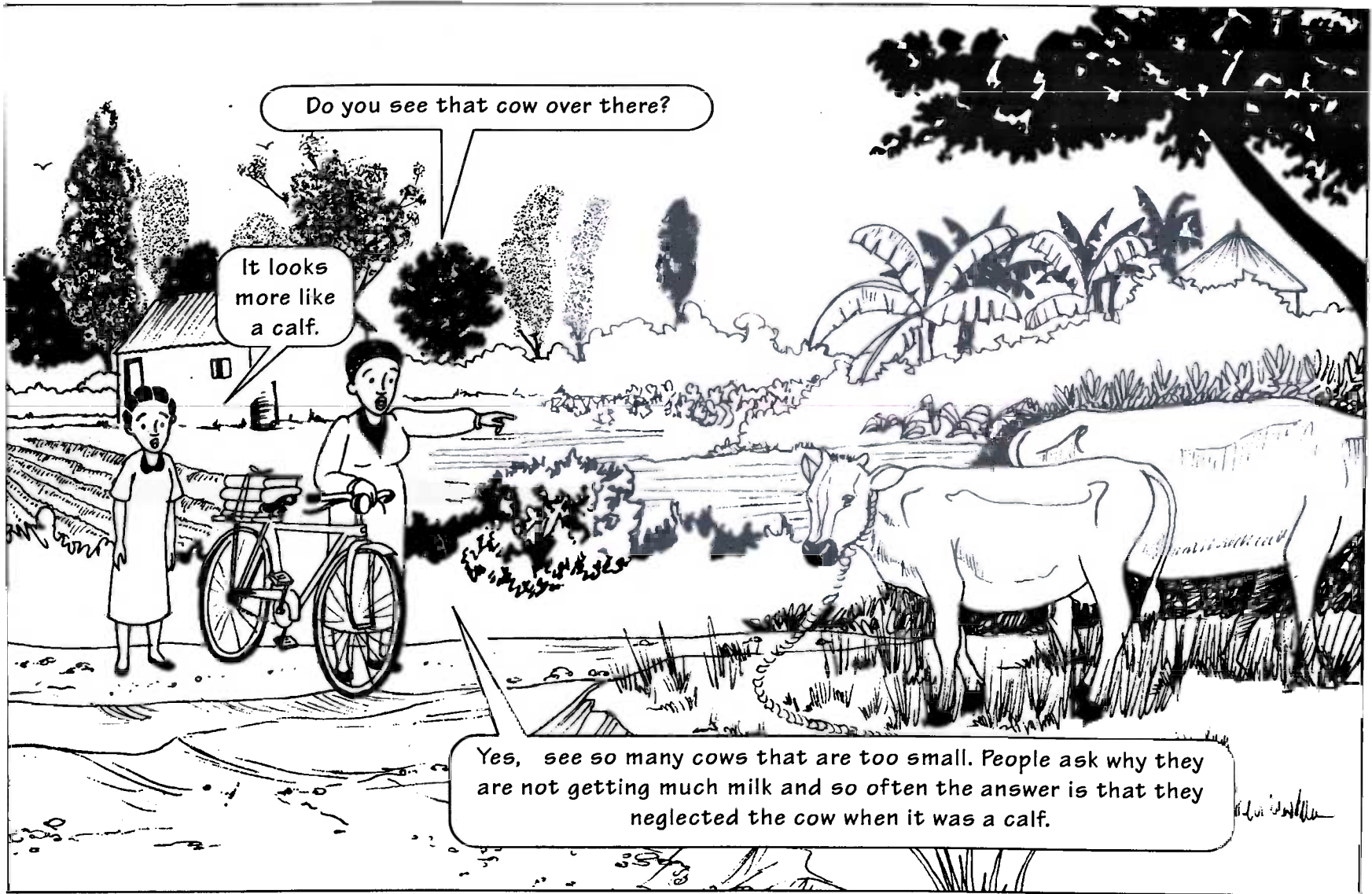
Wambui has gone to see Mwariama, the animal health assistant.

So you see, I really need to know all there is about looking after calves. If anything happens to this calf, it will look as if mother is right and I'm sure that she isn't.



Well, perhaps you are both right. But there is a lot you can do to make sure that your calf gets a good start in life.



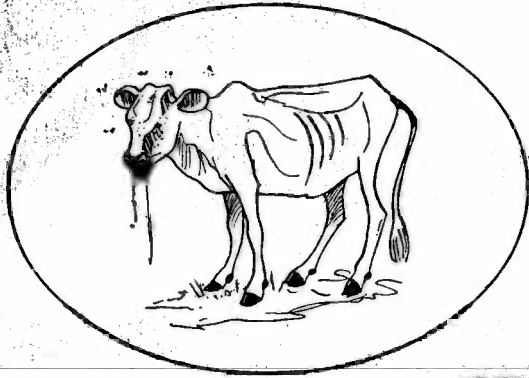


Do you see that cow over there?

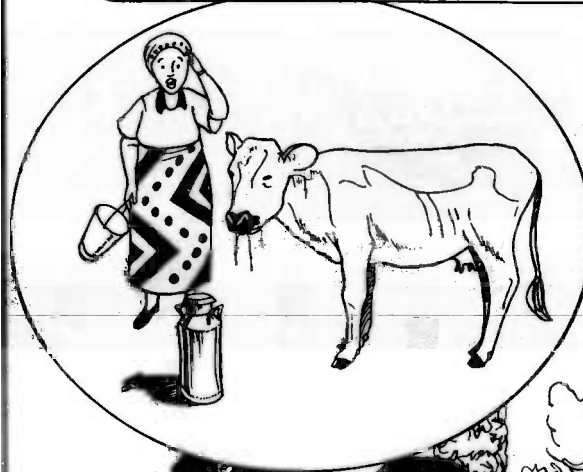
It looks more like a calf.

Yes, see so many cows that are too small. People ask why they are not getting much milk and so often the answer is that they neglected the cow when it was a calf.

Neglect a calf for six months and the cow will neglect you for life.



If the calf doesn't grow properly during the first few months of life it will never catch up, never be completely healthy and never produce as much milk once it is an adult.



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So what is the answer?

In general, you should think of a calf as if it was a baby! You wouldn't leave your own baby hungry, or thirsty or cold or wet or dirty, would you?



No!

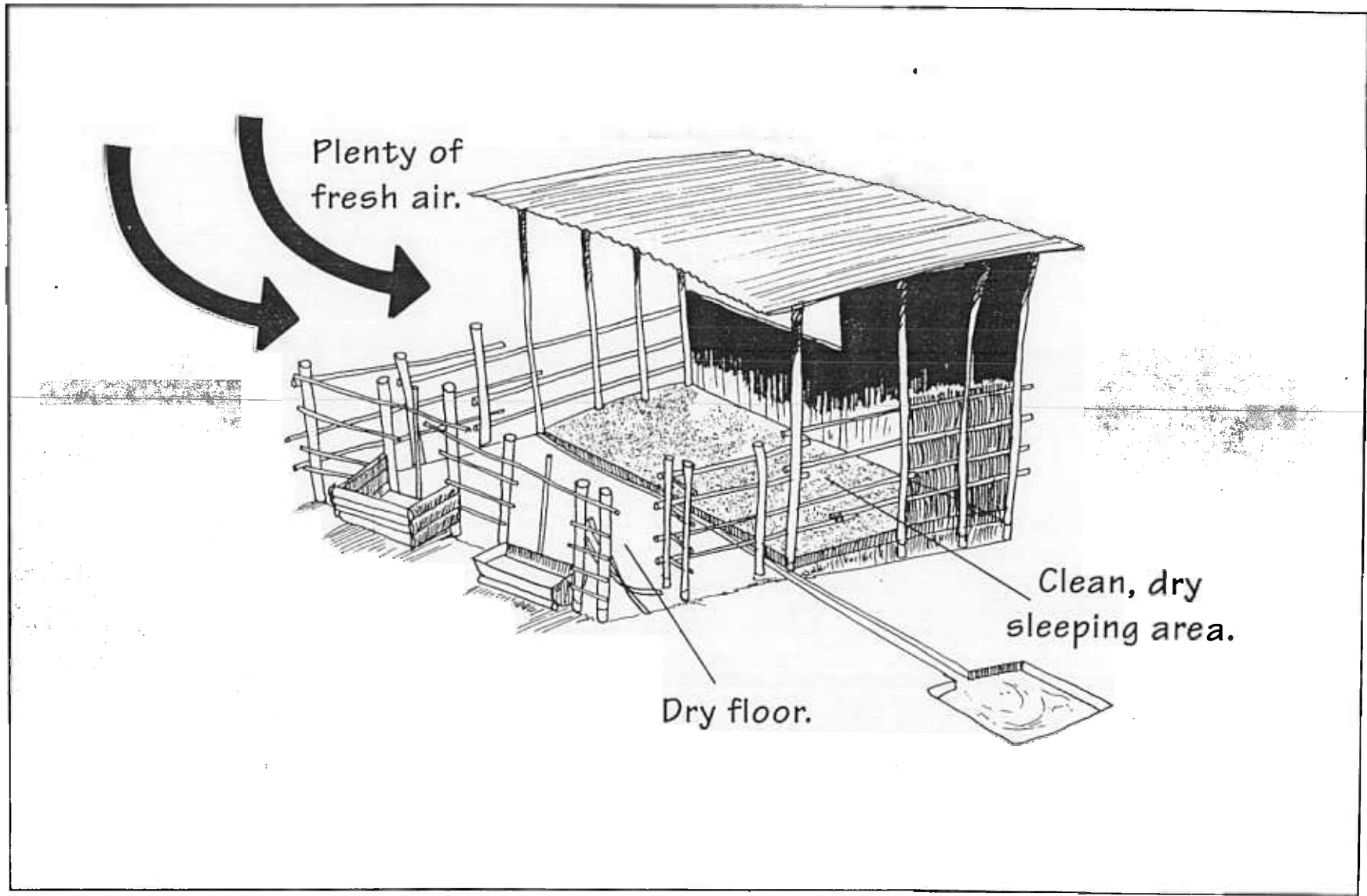
... so the first lesson is to give a calf tender care, just like a baby. Don't ever neglect it. Always attend to it's needs.



The second really important thing is the Boma. We've talked about this before so you should know what makes a good Boma.

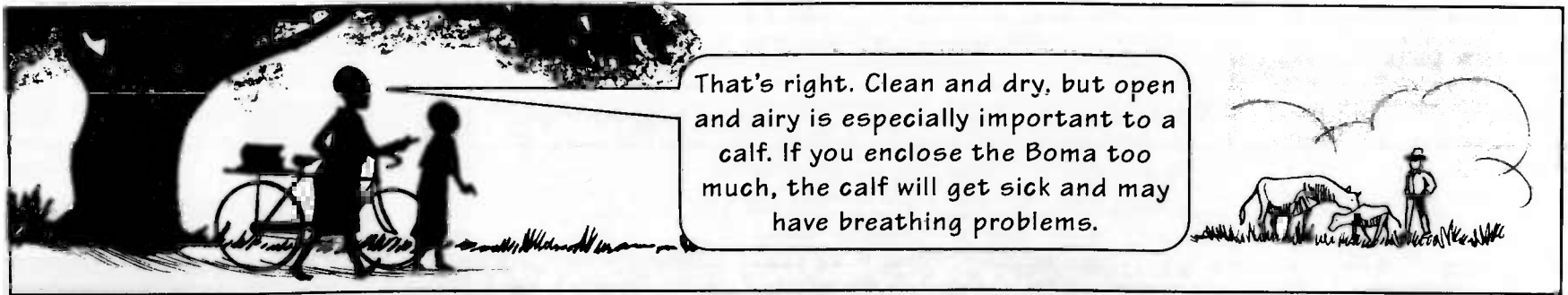
Oh yes!



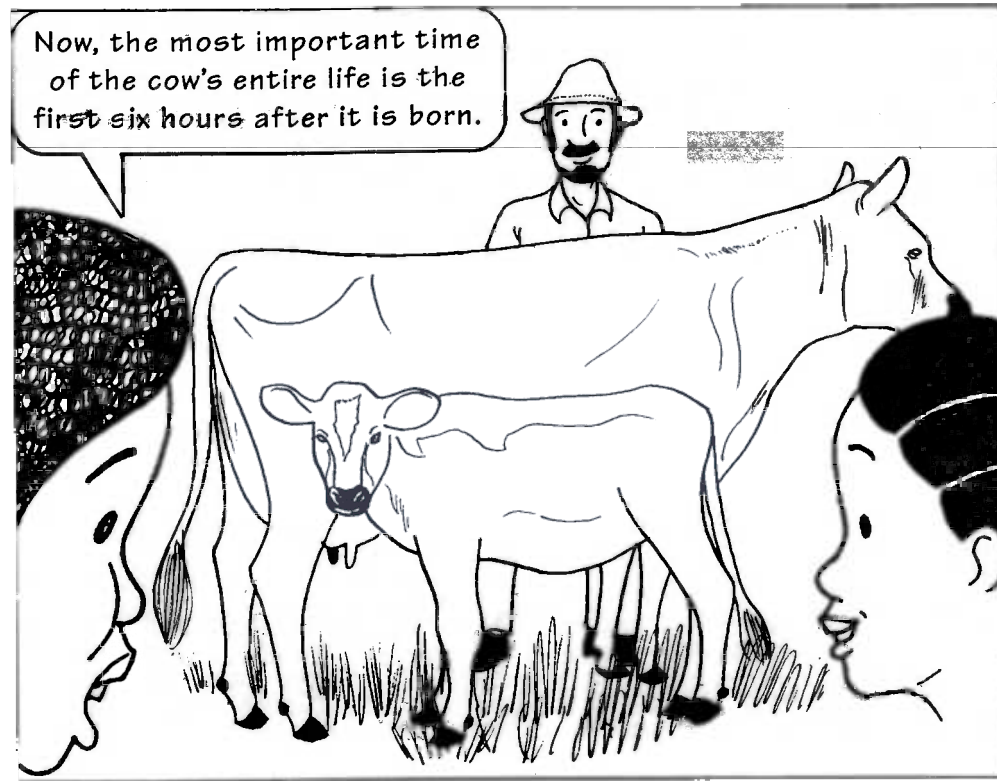


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That's right. Clean and dry, but open and airy is especially important to a calf. If you enclose the Boma too much, the calf will get sick and may have breathing problems.



Now, the most important time of the cow's entire life is the first six hours after it is born.



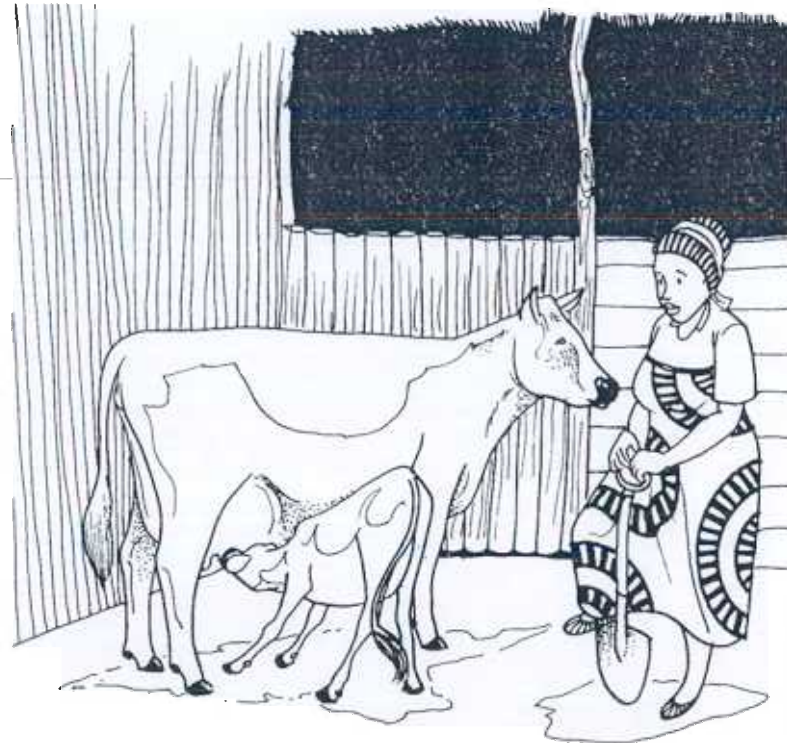
During that time, the thick yellow mother's milk contains things that will protect the calf against many of the illnesses that it might get later on. If it doesn't drink enough of that first milk, then it will be much more likely to be sick and to have diarrhoea.

That sounds just like Mrs. Muriithi's calf. I bet it didn't get enough milk during that first six hours.

That is probably right. Many of the important diseases that young calves get can be prevented if they drink enough of the cows first milk, if they have a clean, dry Boma and if they have a good attendant to look after them ...



... so once the calf is born, dry it off, stand it up and make sure it sucks. As soon as it is standing, show it to it's mother's udder and then keep going back to check that it is drinking. Remember that it must get as much of this milk as possible during it's first six hours - even if it is born at midnight.



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REMEMBER
STRONG COWS
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... for the next three days, the calf should get all the milk that the cow produces. Don't be tempted to start milking the cow for the family before three days pass. The calf really does need it all if it is to get a good start to life.

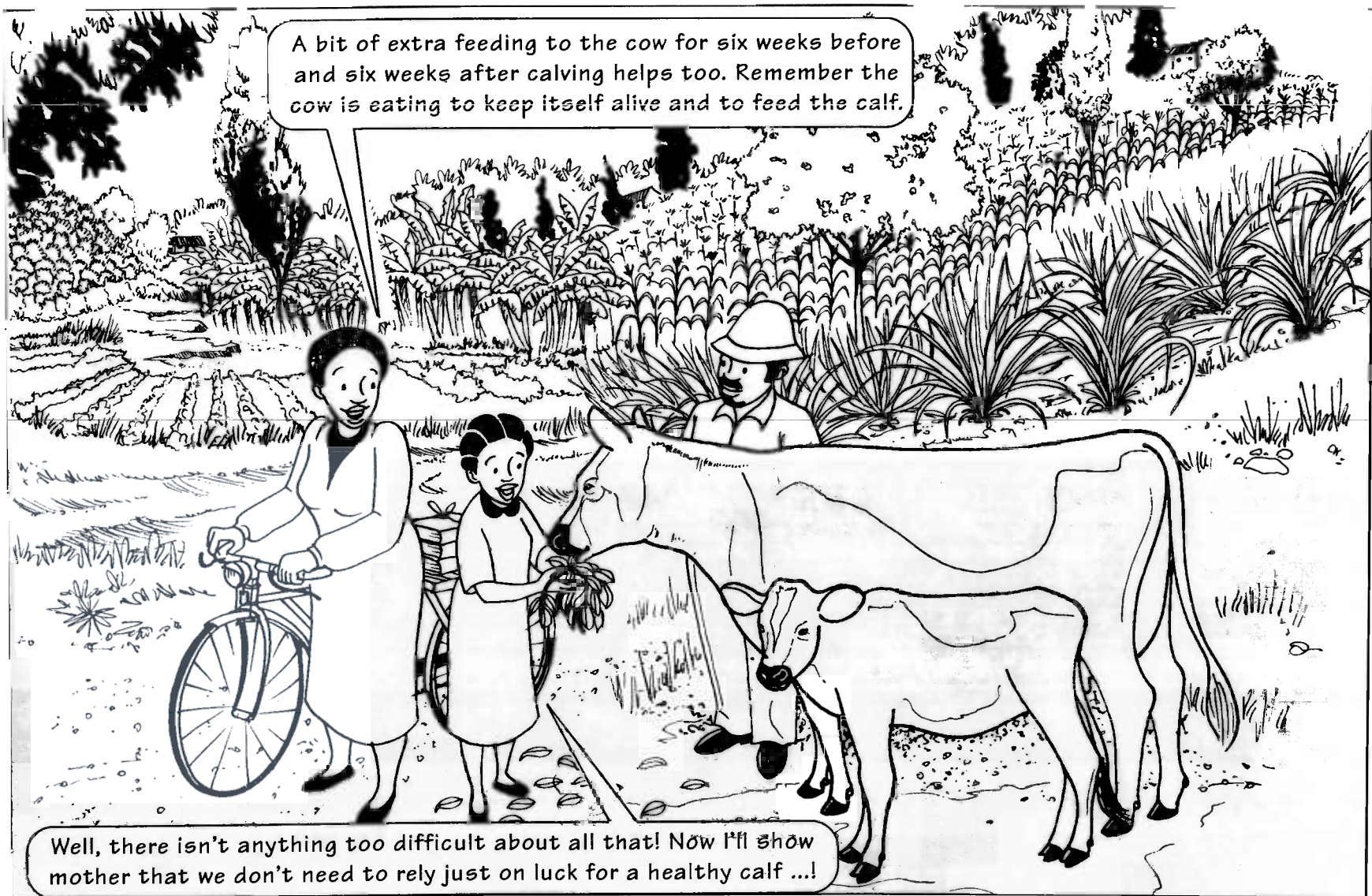


REMEMBER:
STRONG CALVES
GROW INTO
PRODUCTIVE COWS

And even after those first three days, the calf probably needs more milk than you realise, so don't leave it hungry by milking the cow just so that you can drink some! To grow properly, the calf might need as much as 5 trestop bottles of milk everyday.



A bit of extra feeding to the cow for six weeks before and six weeks after calving helps too. Remember the cow is eating to keep itself alive and to feed the calf.



Well, there isn't anything too difficult about all that! Now I'll show mother that we don't need to rely just on luck for a healthy calf ...!

